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Chapter 1
Administration

POLICY AND PROCEDURE
CODE OF ETHICS
and
STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide additional specificity to the standards of conduct embodied in the Newtown Department of Police Services Rules and Regulations and its Policy and Procedures, so that officers of this agency will better understand prohibitions and limitations pertaining to their conduct and activities while on and off duty. The rules of conduct set forth in this policy are not intended to serve as an exhaustive treatment of requirements, limitations, or prohibitions on officer conduct and activities established by this agency.

Rather, these codes of ethics are intended to

- (1) Alert officers to some of the more sensitive and often problematic matters involved in police conduct and ethics;
- (2) Specify, where possible, actions and inactions that are contrary to and that conflict with the duties and responsibilities of law enforcement officers, and
- (3) Guide officers in conducting themselves and their affairs in a manner that reflects standards of department and professionalism as required of law enforcement officers.

Additional guidance on matters of conduct is provided in regard to specific policies, procedures, and directives disseminated by this agency and from officers' immediate supervisors and commanders.

II. POLICY

Actions of officers that are inconsistent, incompatible, or in conflict with the values established by this agency negatively affect its reputation and that of its officers. Such actions and inactions thereby detract from the agency's overall ability to effectively and efficiently protect the public, maintain peace and order, and conduct other essential business. Therefore, it is the policy of this law enforcement agency that officers conduct themselves at all times in a manner that reflects the ethical standards consistent with the rules contained in this policy, with the Rules and Regulations of the Department, and other policies disseminated by this agency.

III DEFINITIONS

Accountability: In the context of this policy, accountability means the duty of all officers to truthfully acknowledge and explain their actions and decisions when requested to do so by an authorized member of this agency without deception or subterfuge.

IV. **PROCEDURES**

A. General Conduct

1. Obedience to Laws, Regulations, and Orders

- a. Officers shall not violate any law or any agency policy, rule, or procedure.
- b. Officers shall obey all lawful orders.
- c. Officers shall make affirmative and consistent efforts to observe and comply with the lawful directives, policies, rules, orders and expectations of the department.
Affirmative effort is best described as self-initiating acceptable ways to comply with all directives and not dwelling on reasons why the directive should not or cannot be performed.

2. Conduct Unbecoming an Officer

Officers shall not engage in any conduct or activities on- or off-duty that reflect discredit on the officers, tend to bring this agency into disrepute, or impair its efficient and effective operation.

3. Accountability, Responsibility, and Discipline

- a. Officers are directly accountable for their actions through the chain of command, to the Chief of Police.
- b. Officers shall cooperate fully in any internal administrative investigation conducted by this or other authorized agency and shall provide complete and accurate information in regard to any issue under investigation.
- c. Officers shall be accurate, complete, and truthful in all matters.
- d. Officers shall accept responsibility for their actions without attempting to conceal, divert, or mitigate their true culpability nor shall they engage in efforts to thwart, influence, or interfere with an internal or criminal investigation.
- e. Officers who are arrested or come under investigation for any criminal offense in this or another jurisdiction shall report this fact to a superior as soon as possible.
- f. Officers shall exercise ordinary common sense and strive to find ways in every contact with the public to promote the department's values as expressed in these standards. Ordinary common sense is best defined as that level of knowledge that a common person with average capabilities and life experiences possesses.

4. Conduct Toward Fellow Employees

- a. Officers shall conduct themselves in a manner that will foster cooperation among members of this agency, showing respect, courtesy, and professionalism in their dealings with one another.
- b. Employees shall not use language or engage in acts that demean, harass, or intimidate another person.
- c. Officers shall display courtesy and respect in words, deeds, gestures, and actions toward all personnel especially those of higher rank. By doing so officers will show tangible indications that they are willing to subordinate their personal priorities, goals and objectives to the organization's needs.

5. Conduct Toward the Public

- a. Officers shall conduct themselves toward the public in a civil and professional manner that connotes a service orientation, which in turn will foster public respect and cooperation.
- b. Officers shall treat violators with respect and courtesy, guard against employing an officious or overbearing attitude or language that may belittle, ridicule, or intimidate the individual, or act in a manner that unnecessarily delays the performance of their duty.
- c. While recognizing the need to demonstrate authority and control over criminal suspects and prisoners, officers shall adhere to this agency's use-of-force policy and shall observe the civil rights and protect the well being of those in their charge.

6. Use of Alcohol and Drugs

- a. Officers shall not consume any intoxicating beverage while on duty unless authorized by a supervisor.
- b. No alcoholic beverage shall be served or consumed on police premises or in vehicles owned by this jurisdiction.
- c. An officer shall not be intoxicated in a public place, whereby his or his actions could be considered conduct unbecoming of an officer.
- d. No officer shall report for duty with the odor of alcoholic beverage on his or her breath.
- e. No officer shall report to work or be on duty as a law enforcement officer when alcohol, medication, or other substances have impaired his or her judgment or physical condition.
- f. Officers must report the use of any substance, prior to reporting for duty that impairs their ability to perform as a law enforcement officer or they must report the use of a substance, which they have been informed, has the potential to impair job performance.
- g. Supervisors may order a drug or alcohol-screening test for an on-duty employee when they have documented probable cause that an employee is using and/or under the influence of drugs or alcohol while on-duty. Such screening shall conform to this agency's policy on employee drug testing.

7. Use of Tobacco Products

While on duty, a police officer shall not use a smoked tobacco product in violation of law or regulation. Also while on duty they shall not use any tobacco product while conducting police business with any citizen. Additionally, officers shall not use any tobacco product while at the scene of any investigation.

8. Abuse of Law Enforcement Powers or Position

- a. Officers shall report any unsolicited gifts, gratuities, or other items of value that they receive and shall provide a full report of the circumstances of their receipt if directed.
- b. Officers shall not use their authority or position for financial gain, for obtaining or granting privileges or favors not otherwise available to them or others except as a private citizen, to avoid the consequences of illegal acts for themselves or for others, to barter, solicit, or accept any goods or services (to include, gratuities, gifts, rewards, loans, or fees) whether for the officer or for another.
- c. Officers shall not convert to their own use, or have any claim to any found, impounded, abandoned, or recovered property, or any property held or released as evidence.
- d. Officers shall not solicit or accept contributions for this agency or for any other law enforcement agency, organization, event, or cause without the express consent of the Chief of Police or his or her designee.
- e. Officers are prohibited from using information gained through their position as a law enforcement officer to advance financial or other private interests of themselves or others.
- f. Officers who institute or reasonably expect to benefit from any civil action that arises from acts performed under color of authority shall inform their commanding officer.

9. Off-Duty Police Action

- a. Officers shall not use their police powers to resolve personal grievances (e.g., those involving the officer, family members, relatives, or friends) except under circumstances that would justify the use of self-defense, actions to prevent injury to another person, or when a serious offense has been committed that would justify an arrest. In all other cases, officers shall summon on-duty police personnel and a supervisor in cases where there is personal involvement that would reasonably require law enforcement intervention.
- b. Unless operating a marked police vehicle, off-duty officers shall not arrest or issue infractions or warnings to traffic violators on sight, except when the violation is of such a dangerous nature that officers would reasonably be expected to take appropriate action.

10. Prohibited Associations and Establishments

- a. Arresting, investigating, or custodial officers shall not commence social relations with the spouse, immediate family member, or romantic companion of persons in the custody of this agency.
- b. Officers shall not knowingly commence or maintain a relationship with any person who is under criminal investigation, indictment, arrest, or incarceration by this or another police or criminal justice agency, and/or who has an open and notorious criminal reputation in the community (for example, persons whom they know, should know, or have reason to believe are involved in felonious activity), except as necessary to the performance of official duties, or where unavoidable because of familial relationships.
- c. Except in the performance of official duties, officers shall not knowingly enter any establishment in which the law of that jurisdiction is regularly violated
- d. Officers shall not knowingly join or participate in any organization that advocates, incites, or supports criminal acts or criminal conspiracies.

B. Public Statements, Appearances, and Endorsements

1. Officers shall not, under color of authority, make any public statement that could be reasonably interpreted as having an adverse effect upon department morale, discipline, operation of the agency, or perception of the public;
 - a. Divulge or willfully permit to have divulged, any information gained by reason of their position, for anything other than its official, authorized purpose; or
 - b. Unless expressly authorized, make any statements, speeches, or appearances that could reasonably be considered to represent the views of this agency.
2. Endorsements: Officers may not, under color of authority, endorse, recommend, or facilitate the sale of commercial products or services. This includes but is not limited to the use of tow services, repair firms, attorneys, bail bondsmen, or other technical or professional services. It does not pertain to the endorsement of appropriate governmental services where there is a duty to make such endorsements.

C. Political Activity

Officers shall be guided by state law regarding their participation and involvement in political activities. Where state law is silent on this issue, officers shall be guided by the following examples of prohibited political activities during working hours, while in uniform, or otherwise serving as a representative of this agency:

1. Place or affix any campaign literature on town-owned property;
2. Solicit political funds from any member of this agency or another governmental agency of this jurisdiction;
3. Engage in any political activity;
4. Solicit contributions, signatures, or other forms of support for political candidates, parties, or ballot measures on property owned by this jurisdiction;
5. Use official authority to interfere with any election or interfere with the political actions of other employees or the general public;
6. Favor or discriminate against any person seeking employment because of political opinions or affiliations;

7. Participate in any type of political activity while in uniform.

D. Expectations of Privacy

1. Officers shall not store personal information or belongings with an expectation of personal privacy in such places as lockers, desks, departmentally owned vehicles, file cabinets, computers, or similar areas that are under the control and management of this law enforcement agency. While this agency recognizes the need for officers to occasionally store personal items in such areas, officers should be aware that these and similar places may be inspected or otherwise entered—to meet operational needs, internal investigatory requirements, or for other reasons—at the direction of the Chief of Police or his or her designee.
2. No member of this agency shall maintain files or duplicate copies of official agency files in either manual or electronic formats at his or her place of residence or in any other location outside the confines of this agency without express permission.

E. Phones:

1. Personnel cell phones or department cell phones must be registered with the Chief of Police if they will be carried with or used by officers while on duty, or in pay status as a Town of Newtown police officer.
2. Officers are prohibited from talking on a cell phone while driving any Town of Newtown vehicle unless they are using an approved hands-free method.
3. Officers are prohibited from talking on a cell phone while conducting traffic control duties.
4. Officers while on duty shall devote their whole time and attention to their duties, and their service to the department. Officers shall not engage in long personnel phone calls nor frequent personnel phone calls. The standard should be the rare personal emergency phone call.

F. LAW ENFORCEMENT OATH OF HONOR:

1. As evidence of the department's commitment and the officer's commitment to high standards of ethics, each officer will publicly affirm his/her ethical integrity by reciting the following Law Enforcement Oath of Honor whenever an officer is hired, or promoted. This solemn pledge ensures a continuity of high ethical standards for the officers, the organization and the community.

Law Enforcement Oath of Honor

*On my honor, I will never
betray my badge, my integrity,
my character or the public trust.*

*I will always have the courage to hold
myself and others accountable for our actions.*

*I will always uphold the constitution,
my community and the agency I serve.*